

31st Fighter Wing: The U.S. Air Force's fighter wing south of the Alps

THE VIGILEER

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Aviano Air Base, Italy

Fly Bys

Spouse It Up

The next Spouse It Up is at 10:30 a.m. Jan. 25 in the Area D lodge. For more information, call the Family Support Center at Ext. 5407.

31st MDG hours

The 31st Medical Group is closed today and Monday in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Extended care services are available from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at the Family Practice Clinic in Area One.

Promotions

Congratulations to **Lt. Col. John DeGoes**, 31st Medical Operations Squadron commander, on his selection for promotion to colonel and selection to attend Senior Development Education. Congratulations to **Lt. Col. Robert Delo**, 31st Dental Squadron commander, and **Lt. Col. Gordon Peters**, 31st Aerospace Medicine Squadron commander, on their selection for promotion to colonel. Congratulations to **Maj. Laura Brodhag**, 510th Fighter Squadron, and **Maj. Kimberly Pietszak**, 31st Medical Group on their selection for promotion to lieutenant colonel. Congratulations to **Capt. Raymond Clydesdale**, 31st AMDS, and **Capt. Carl Labella**, 31st DS, on their selection for promotion to major.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Holzworth

Welcome home

Members of the Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade from Vicenza, Italy, return from their year-long deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Listen, learn and lead: COMUSAFE takes the reins

By Master Sgt. Chuck Roberts
USAFE Public Affairs

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany
(USAFENS) – He is here to lead U.S. Air Forces in Europe, but brings a leadership style keen on listening and learning from Airmen in his command. And after a month on the job, Gen. Tom Hobbins likes what he hears and is confident the command is heading in the right direction.

“When you look at the accomplishments

of what our folks are doing, to include those people who are in Iraq and those people who are in Afghanistan, I think you'll find that everybody is very excited because they get up in the morning, they look themselves in the mirror and they say, ‘You know, we're making a difference – we really are helping people,’” said General Hobbins. “We are fighting this war on terrorism with extreme dedication, and I see everyone interested in

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Closed: The passenger terminal is closed Monday for Martin Luther King Jr., Day. For more information or schedules, call Ext. 7680.

31st FW Sortie Board

sortie: n, a flight of a combat aircraft on a mission

	Hours	Sorties
31st FW goal	554.2	400
	+27.3	+22

Information current as of Wednesday.



Canine work

A military working dog receives a root canal on a broken canine from the veterinarian and the 31st Dental Squadron dentists

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Track star

While deployed, an Aviano Airman hones his jumping skills for a chance to join the Air Force track team.

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31st Fighter Wing

Commander's Corner

By Brig. Gen. Robert Yates
31st Fighter Wing commander

Happy New Year World's Finest! This week I am thrilled to read of the many wonders of your collective performance; I marvel at your accomplishments – seems they never end. I could get used to that! You have all amazed an extremely humbled wing commander. What I'm talking about is my joy at reading the results of your labor -- the harvest of the end-of-year USAFE-level award announcements. Our awards include: Mission Support Squadron of the Year, Aircraft Maintenance Squadron of the Year and a list of individual and other awards as long as your arm.

Then to top it all off, on Tuesday I had the pleasure of welcoming our first Air Expeditionary Force 7/8 re-deployers home as our aviation package arrived -- 12 F-16 aircraft and crews launched by the best and delivered on target, on time: World's Finest standard!

In the midst of all this excellence we also enjoyed a relatively safe holiday season. While we did suffer a hand injury attributable to use of fireworks (all take heed of potential danger associated with their use), overall there were no life-threatening or debilitating injuries or serious accidents. I was also quite encouraged as we experienced zero DUIs over the holidays ... until Jan. 3 when one of our own made a mistake. So while our performance in this area was not a huge victory, we must focus on the positive and learn from our mistakes – my advice would be to avoid fireworks, but if you insist on using them, be extremely careful. And as always, plan ahead and do not drink and drive!

Now a holiday parties debrief ... I was very impressed with the collective sense of fun and holiday spirit by you and your families at unit holiday parties. The fun spanned the spectrum from great music and conversation to rowdy scavenger hunts. In fact, I've never witnessed such intensity during "scavenger hunts for prizes!" At each event, I was impressed by the mutual respect, inclusiveness and camaraderie I saw. Barb and I would like to thank you all for including us. Our enjoyment of your company was exceeded only by the warmth of your hospitality.

Now onto this week's theme: Winning. I believe it was Coach Vince Lombardi who once said, "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing." I must admit, I'm a Coach Lombardi

disciple. In line with this thought, I'd like to devote the rest of this column to discuss what I define as winning in a fighter wing.

Winning in a fighter wing consists of doing your job to the best of your ability each and every day. Your job is important to the team and no job is more important than another. Only the level of performance matters. So all of you out there among the World's Finest medics, administrators, mechanics, pilots, drivers, aerospace ground experts and crew chiefs – what I need every day is your best performance in your line of work. This will allow us to meet our ultimate goal – to be the World's Finest Military Organization. As we embark on achieving this goal this year, it is appropriate to take a look back at our 2005 performance.

Our performance in 2005 consisted of the phenomenal production of 'the coin of the realm' – the ultimate measure of any combat flying outfit -- combat sorties and hours. Remarkably, we produced more than 2,500 combat sorties and 10,500 combat hours. As our new boss, General Hobbins, points out in an AFN commercial – USAFE and this wing are all about "flying, fighting, and winning!" Air Force Chief of Staff General Moseley stated that the U.S. Air Force is about "flying and fighting." If you buy into their statements, the 31st Fighter Wing showed that we're all about flying, fighting and winning and earned the title, "World's Finest," in 2005.

In light of such fantastic performance last year, it's only right to discuss our docket for 2006. First, we've got an inspection at the end of February; I need you all to focus on this. After the inspection and through early summer, we'll focus on training and deployments. In late summer/early fall we'll be back to preparing for another inspection and AEF deployments. As we approach 2007 and the arrival of winter we'll complete the "circle of AEF life" and deploy the World's Finest to meet AEF taskings.

As we draw to a close, Barb and I would like to congratulate each of you for a superior performance in 2005 -- spouses also -- take a bow. Together, we'll continue to drive the high road of World's Finest performance through 2006. We'd also like to say thanks for all you do ... and for doing it so well. We wish each of you Godspeed, Happy New Year, winning and the realization of all your dreams in 2006.



From the best air base in Europe, I wish to all the U.S. community a beautiful, Happy New Year full of joy and satisfaction--looking forward to spend a great year together.

- Col. Roberto Sardo
ITAF commander

EUCOM, components prepare for pandemic flu

By Maj. Pamela A.Q. Cook
U.S. European Command

Officials are meeting in Stuttgart this week to plan how to best deal with a potential outbreak of avian influenza that could mutate into a pandemic flu.

Conference attendees, including subject matter experts from throughout the region, are creating a comprehensive plan in coordination with U.S. European Command, host nations, the Department of Defense and other governmental agencies to deal with a possible pandemic caused by the mutation of the H5N1 influenza virus, more commonly known as "bird flu," that is currently circulating through domestic and wild bird flocks around the world.

"Due to the serious consequences presented by a potential pandemic, and in support of U.S. government worldwide efforts, EUCOM is coordinating with appropriate organizations and governments to ensure that people are protected and informed," said Air Force Lt. Col. Ron Sanders, the lead project officer for EUCOM's pandemic influenza response team.

The DOD, Department of State, Health and Human Services, World Health Organization, and other governments and agencies are preparing for a possible pandemic – a global outbreak of disease – of avian influenza. These organizations are building on the knowledge and experience from other recent public health crises, including SARS and the 2001 anthrax attacks, to meet the threat of a pandemic outbreak. EUCOM and its component commands are continuing the planning process to protect their service members, family members and employees while maintaining operational readiness.

The presence of even a limited number of human cases of avian influenza has raised concerns that the current situation could become a pandemic if the virus develops the ability to spread from human

to human. If such a situation should occur in Europe, the EUCOM plan suggests individuals should be prepared to increase good personal hygiene practices. In the event of an epidemic avian influenza outbreak, social distancing and quarantine procedures may have to be implemented. Social distancing includes limiting social gatherings and interactions such as attending school, churches, civic clubs and groups, and work activities. Local commanders and health officials will notify personnel of specific procedures on their installations.

Some existing antiviral treatments are available to possibly mitigate a pandemic influenza virus. Currently there is no vaccination available to counter the virus in its existing form. Once the bird flu virus has mutated to where it can be passed from human to human, experts estimate it will take at least six to nine months to develop an effective vaccine. However, the mitigating antiviral medications have proven somewhat successful at blocking the replication of the virus if treatment begins within 24 to 48 hours.

While it is unusual for people to get influenza infections directly from animals, sporadic human infections and outbreaks caused by certain avian influenza viruses are cause for concern. These sporadic human infections, however, rarely result in sustained transmission among humans. Avian flu currently does not have the ability to be transmitted through human-to-human contact.

In order for the bird flu virus, or any virus for that matter, to cause a pandemic, several factors must be present. According to a town hall meeting on the subject hosted by the American Consulate General in Frankfurt, Germany, the most notable factors include the ability for the virus to replicate itself in humans and to be efficiently able to transmit from human to human. When the human population does not have immunity against such a virus, a pandemic is possible.

Even though the bird flu and human flu viruses are different, they are spread in the same way, and experts are unsure whether the current strains of avian influenza will evolve into a pandemic strain. However, it has shown the ability to mutate, so it is a concern. While there have been changes in the virus over time, there is currently no indication that the virus has changed to a form that could result in a pandemic. This possibility is being closely monitored by numerous health organizations around the world.

In that vein, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, part of the National Institutes of Health, awarded two contracts to support the production and clinical testing of an investigational vaccine based on the H5N1 strain of avian influenza. Before a pandemic strikes, there is no way to tell what the particular strain of virus will be. Research studies to test a vaccine to protect humans against this strain began in 2005.

Conference attendees stress that it is extremely important that people remain calm about the potential for a pandemic. While no vaccination for this strain of flu currently exists, individuals can take precautions as simple as getting a regular flu shot and maintaining good health practices such as eating balanced diets and exercising.

Travelers to areas with identified outbreaks of avian flu are encouraged to take necessary precautions to prevent the contraction and spread of this disease. It is believed that most cases of bird flu infection in humans have resulted from contact with infected poultry or contaminated surfaces. Most of the proven cases have occurred following close contact with infected birds or a massive ingestion of undercooked infected chicken meat or chicken blood. International travelers should visit the State Department's travel Web site at www.travel.state.gov to determine the travel restrictions in their destination country.

Money Matter\$: The Family Support Center offers money management classes. Call Tom Snyder at Ext. 5456 for more information.

New access channel links Aviano members to info

By 1st Lt. Nicole Dubnicay
31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The World's Finest can now tune into a new source for local command information and base events right from their desktop.

Through the local area network, computer users will have a new icon located on their desktop called "Cisco IPTV Viewer." By double clicking the icon, they can now see local AFN television's Atlantic, Sports, News, Pentagon and Spectrum channels and the new Commander's Access Channel.

The CCAC is designed to give Airmen information about Aviano and help commanders disseminate information. The 31st Fighter Wing's CCAC is different from other versions; this system has the capability to play multiple information fields and can incorporate video.

Aviano members can check out upcoming events on base, important services, weather, sortie status and much more by choosing the CCAC channel on the IPTV viewer.

To input information on the CCAC, call Public Affairs at Ext. 7555, or e-mail 31FW.CCAC@aviano.af.mil. For questions on IPTV call 31st FW Computer Help Desk at Ext. 4481.

Military working dog receives root canal

By Senior Airman
Colleen Wronek

31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Normally dentists work on human patients, but last month Aviano dentists found themselves working on a canine's canine.

It all started when Allan, a 10-year-old German shepherd military working dog at Aviano, was getting a checkup at the base veterinary clinic.

His handler, Staff Sgt. Justin Devaney, 31st Security Forces Squadron, had suspected that there was a problem, and Army Capt. Eric Lombardini, 31st Services Squadron veterinarian, confirmed that Allan had a broken tooth.

"The weird thing about dogs is they don't really show pain. You have to observe it," said Sergeant Devaney, who became Allan's handler in August. "While eating he would drop his food or during bite work he didn't use his whole mouth."

Although Sergeant Devaney isn't sure how Allan broke his tooth, he thinks it might have been from bite work. As part of his military duties, Allan does bite and attack work, explosive detection, and is patrol – certified. He has also been deployed all over the world during the eight years he's been assigned to Aviano.

"We gave Allan thorough exams, took X-rays and decided he needed a root canal," Captain Lombardini said.



Photo by Capt. Eric Lombardini

Maj. (Dr.) Matt Bronk, 31st Dental Squadron support flight commander, gives a root canal to Allan a 31st Security Forces Squadron military working dog.

"Because of their specialization, for major extractions, I prefer the help and guidance from dentists."

He contacted the 31st Dental Squadron and received assistance from two dentists and one dental technician. They also brought along equipment needed for the surgery that wasn't available in the veterinary clinic – a mobile X-ray tube/unit, a digital X-ray unit/sensor, a laptop to read the X-rays and several dental and surgical instruments.

Some of the human tools wouldn't work, however, because dogs have considerably longer teeth than humans.

"The tooth was a maxillary canine. In humans, this tooth is generally 30 millimeters or less in length. In a dog, especially a large dog such as a German shepherd, the tooth can be up to 80 mil-

limeters long and they are much more curved below and above the gum line," said Maj. (Dr.) Matt Bronk, 31st DS support flight commander. "Our files only go to 30 millimeters. Fortunately, Captain Lombardini had some long files specifically made for dogs."

With all the needed equipment on hand, the assembled surgical team began the root canal on an unconscious Allan at the veterinary clinic.

The dentists, who had never performed surgery on an animal before, also faced some challenges. "Because of the way the tooth was shaped after it fractured, we were unable to place a rubber dam that helps us maintain a cleaner environment," said Major Bronk. "Fortunately we had good isolation because when a dog is under general anesthesia he will have a dry mouth. Had the dog been awake, he would have been salivating, not to mention difficult to hold down while doing the root canal."

According to Captain Lombardini, dogs get a lot of the same dental diseases people do. "Dogs are vivacious and chew rocks that can cause severe damage to their teeth," he said. "When the exposed internal part of a tooth gets an infection that runs to the root, it can go septic. A lot of heart disease starts in tooth infections."

Fortunately, Allan had a dedicated group that came together to help him and he is currently healing, eating better and will soon be back on patrol.

Tea: The Order of the Eastern Star is hosting an invitational tea from 2 to 4 p.m. Jan. 21 in the community center. For more information, call Ext. 7844.

Returning AEF reminded to attend reintegration

By Senior Airman Colleen Wronek
31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Those Airmen returning from Air Expeditionary Force 7/8 are reminded to participate in the reintegration process.

The process gives those returning a chance to complete all medical and non-medical post-deployment requirements. It also identifies high-risk individuals who have been exposed to unusual danger, experienced loss, witnessed disturbing events, been injured or had major family challenges.

"Reintegration is mandatory for all returning members. It provides all the necessary in-processing without having to visit each individual organization," said Master Sgt. Eric Alber, 31st Mission Support Squadron family readiness NCO. "During reintegration, those returning receive a medical records review, complete their travel voucher and receive several briefings that help their transition from the deployed location back to the normal day-to-day operations with their colleagues, friends and family members."

Reintegration is a four-day process. The first day is the day when you arrive, the second day is a mandatory 24 hours off and the third and fourth days are half days of in-processing.

The U.S. Air Forces in Europe policy for people returning from a deployment is that commanders will provide one day of down time for every six days deployed, for a maximum of 14 days. Airmen have the option of taking a four-day pass during their down-time, but leave must begin and end in the local area. If a member plans to depart the local area for more than four days, they must be on ordinary leave.

"The day after reintegration is when the 14-day reconstitution leave starts," Sergeant Alber said. "A good rule of thumb for the spouses and loved ones of returning members is not to plan any travel for seven days from the date the returning member comes back."

Personnel returning to Aviano on Sundays, Mondays or Tuesdays will attend reintegration on Thursdays and Fridays. Personnel returning on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays or Saturdays will attend reintegration on Mondays and Tuesdays. Reintegration is held in the base theater.

Personnel with questions regarding the reintegration schedule should contact their commander, first sergeant or unit deployment manager. Anyone with questions regarding Aviano's overall reintegration program may contact Sergeant Alber at Ext. 5663.

Aviano Honor Guard

The Aviano Honor Guard has a history of performing for the 31st Fighter Wing. The honor guard is comprised of 15 full-time members, all of whom are volunteers. The team has set a goal to increase membership by 150 percent to reach a total of 45 members by the end of 2006.

On average, the honor guard performs 65 details a year; the majority consisting of change of command ceremonies, retirement ceremonies and Airman Leadership School graduations.

Team membership has minimum of a one-year contract with the option to extend a year. Outstanding team members usually earn an Air Force Achievement Medal at the end of their commitment.

Membership opens up travel opportunities, additional training, and special-duty job opportunities, as well as base recognition.

Aviano members interested in joining the honor guard should call 1st Lt. Amanda Lancaster at Ext. 7586 or Capt. Shaun Meadows at Ext. 5392.



Photo by 1st Lt. Nicole Dubnicay

Holiday dinner

From left: Lt. Col. Suzanne Kumashiro, 31st Mission Support Group deputy commander and Lt. Col. Patrick Kumashiro, 31st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron commander, sit with the 31st AMXS Honorary Squadron commander Bruno Carraro and his wife, Tiziana at the HSC holiday dinner Dec. 16.

USAFE, from page 1

staying and continuing the kind of work they are doing.”

The general can base that assumption from the hundreds of USAFE Airmen he's encountered since assuming command. Although General Hobbins is no stranger to USAFE after serving as its director of operations during the air war over Kosovo, the general makes it a high priority not just to meet as many people as possible, but to learn from each encounter.

“I am very proud to be the 34th USAFE commander and am very proud to serve with (our fellow USAFE Airmen) – it's an honor,” the general said. “I'm really here to listen at first and try to understand what it is that people are doing and what it is they would see us do to make the team better. So I'm around and about asking those questions – are there methods and procedures you feel could be changed to allow us to become more efficient?”

“I hope people will understand that I care about them and want to hear from them what I need to change – I value what they tell me,” General Hobbins said.

Such encounters also provide personal satisfaction, as was evident during a recent trip to Iraq that culminated with the general dancing with fellow USAFE Airmen deployed there.

“Every time I walk into a workplace, someone walks up to shake hands,” the general said. “They are very dedicated to the job they are doing and they are excited about it – that gives me energy when I meet people like that ... it gives me strength.”

General Hobbins said their can-do attitude also fits well into a new direction for USAFE – a shift from a fighter aircraft-centric type of mission to more of a balance with the mobility-centric mission. The general pointed to the state-of-the-art air freight terminal at Ramstein and the Airmen who work there. In addition to

the general, the Airmen themselves are impressed with technology that allows them to support fellow Airmen and sister services downrange with timely delivery of critical parts and supplies.

“Airmen really want to be analyzers of information and not just inputters of information, so we're seeing that change and that shift,” said the general. That mindset is in lockstep with Air Force initiatives such as Smart Ops 21.

Smart Ops 21 is a business strategy that aims to eliminate waste, save time and money and refocus Air Force resources on its core missions. It is all about increasing efficiency by identifying actions not contributing to core missions and that help eliminate waste.

“The USAFE team is up for that and I know they can come up with great ideas that are going to make us more efficient,” said General Hobbins.

The general's optimism is derived in part from a leadership style that includes thoughtful decision making, but also encourages effort and initiative.

“In a command such as this that is already doing such a tremendous job, any change must be done carefully and in consultation with all involved. Have everybody in the room when making a decision and empower all to present ideas. That's why I think we were so successful in Kosovo,” said the general.

However, even the most well conceived plans sometimes fail, but good leaders still stand among their people with equal support and enthusiasm.

“As the level of difficulty of a problem gets higher and higher, you need to rise with it, and you never want to lose confidence in your people if they fail,” said General Hobbins. “You want to demonstrate that, ‘Hey, we understand that people make mistakes and we want to learn from those

mistakes. I do not believe in rule through fear and don't want my commanders to rule with fear.”

Leadership and self-improvement also come from taking initiative and making the most of the opportunities life presents you, said General Hobbins, who keeps a copy of “Lincoln on Leadership” within an arm's reach in his office. As a young officer, he recalled spending time “hanging around the ops counter” on nonflying days just in case a fellow pilot was forced to cancel a mission so he could step in and help out.

The general also experienced similar fortune by accepting an assignment turned down by the previous seven candidates. When General Hobbins, his wife Robbin and their five children arrived at Keflavik Naval Air Station in Iceland, they were faced with only one television station and brutal winds across a treeless land.

“It sounded bad but it turned out to be one of the best assignments,” the general said, explaining that their family became even closer since the lack of other entertainment forced them to spend lots of quality time together playing games.

It's probably no coincidence the general and his family were able to cope successfully in Iceland. Taking care of family is high on the general's priority list, and one he promotes for those in his command.

“You have an Air Force family which is an extended family, and you have your own family that you love and spend time with, but frequently we devote too much time to our careers and not enough time with families at home,” the general said. “I think it's important to have balance.”

“I would like to encourage people to spend a little more time on the weekends dedicated to their families if they can. Your children learn and see what you do, and from that, life becomes successful for them as well.”

2005: Year in Re



Photo by Senior Airman Nichole Adamowicz
Brig. Gen. Robert Yates assumes command of the 31st Fighter Wing June 1 from Lt. Gen. Arthur Lichte, U.S. Air Forces in Europe vice commander.

January

Tire spikes – Aviano leadership encouraged all American drivers to have their tires inspected for possible damage caused by base exit tire spikes.

Wingman saves baby – Staff Sgt. Laki-sha Croley, 31st Communications Squadron, earned a wingman coin for coming to the aid of a single mother and helping save a baby's life.

Surety visit – A U.S. Air Forces in Europe Surety Staff Assistance visit examined the 31st Fighter Wing surety program. The team focused on safety, surety and reliability.

February

Record snow – Aviano awoke to find a winter wonderland after a record-breaking snowfall blanketed the area, causing the base to shut down for the day. More than five inches accumulated in some areas. According to the 31st Operations Support Squadron Weather Operations flight, this was the first time in recorded history the area received so much snow during February.

March

Nickel trains in Florida – Members of Aviano's 555th Fighter Squadron and Eglin Air Force Base's 86th Fighter Weapon Squadron watched via video as pilots dropped weapons on targets at a Florida test range. The 555th FS went to Eglin for Combat Hammer, an exercise to build, load and employ laser-guided weapons and Joint Direct Attack Munitions.

High school award – Aviano High School Principal Doug McEnery was selected as Principal of the Year for Department of Defense Dependent Schools Europe as well as the Mediterranean district.

Dodgeball descends on Aviano Airmen – The 31st Security Forces Squadron Cen-

turion Team copped top honors during Team Aviano's first dodgeball tournament. Aviano's Top Three Association and the Dragon Fitness Center combined forces to chair the Project Cheer event as more than 30 teams vied for the title.

Blood drive – Aviano members rolled up their sleeves and helped give the gift of life during the base's first U.S. Army Europe Blood Donor Center blood drive.

April

No DUIs for 31st Medical Group in more than 731 days – The 31st Medical Group celebrated two years without a DUI with a small ceremony and a barbecue. Members of the group were also awarded a goal day for their achievement.

Crash recovery – Airmen boarded aircraft bound for Albania to help with recovery efforts after a C-130 crashed there. Airmen from the 31st Fighter Wing provided security, communications and other types of assistance.

New phone switch – Aviano's telephone system got a make-over as the 31st Communications Squadron introduced a new telephone switch. The telephone switch that was replaced was the oldest telephone switch in the Air Force inventory.

Best in Air Force – The 31st Maintenance Operations Squadron surpassed 55 others in the service, winning the 2004 Air Force Maintenance Effectiveness Award for its maintenance management, training and support for the 31st Fighter

Wing. The squadron helped the 31st FW to achieve 8,734 sorties and 20,164 flying hours during 2004, which exceeded the original program by 45 percent.

May

Aviano earns top unit award – The 31st Fighter Wing earned the Air Force Outstanding Unit award for its support of Operations Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and Joint Forge. This was the tenth time the 31st FW has won this award. It was actually the first wing ever to win the award in 1954.

Supporting OEF – A large part of the 603rd Air Control Squadron was deployed to Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

June

New facilities – Brig. Gen. Robert Yates, 31st Fighter Wing commander, along with other local and visiting dignitaries, performed the ribbon cutting at the new consolidated post office and base theater piazza June 30.

July

Honoring the fallen – United States and Italian Air Force members saluted side by side as a monument honoring fallen U.S. Army Air Force crew members was unveiled in Grado, Italy. The monument dedication was in recognition of a B-24 Liberator crew who died during



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Holzworth
Aviano Elementary School students learn how to march from a former drill instructor during a Combat Care children's deployment day at the 603rd Air Control Squadron compound Oct. 18. The purpose of the event was to teach children about some of the things their parents do during a deployment.

Review

WWII after their plane was shot down June 30, 1944. The monument features the B-24 propeller that was recovered Jan. 30, 1966, with only two of its three blades and a dedication in English, Italian and German.

August

Top fighter wing – Aviano Air Base took the overall top fighter wing trophy in U.S. Air Forces Europe's Excalibur training exercise at Lakenheath Air Base, United Kingdom, Aug. 19.

Community involvement – Two communities came together for an evening of sports, games and friendship during a soccer match and traditional American-style barbecue Italian-American festival.

Top Load Crew – The 31st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron's aircraft armament technicians were named Top Load Crew during the U.S. Air Forces in Europe Sure Fire '05 competition at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, Aug. 24-25. The fastest load team was made up of Staff Sgt. Scott Batson, load team chief, and load team members Senior Airman Dallas Thornton and Senior Airman Joel Stanfield.

September

Sharing – U.S. aircraft at the Moscow International Air Show and Space Salon at Ramenskoye Airfield didn't just share airspace and the runway with the Russians – they also shared fuel during the Aug. 21 show. Normally topped off with JP-8, the eight American aircraft received a doctored-up version of Russia's TS-1 thanks to two petroleum, oil and lubricants specialists from the 31st Logistics Readiness Squadron at Aviano.

Friendship Day – Aviano's Honorary Squadron Commanders Association hosted the Second Annual Italian-American Friendship Day at the San Quirino municipal park. The event got the local Italian and American communities together for a day of sports, entertainment, music and Italian food.

Welcome home – Aviano celebrated the return of Aerospace Expeditionary Force 5/6 with a celebration in Hangar One.

Italian change of command – Col. Roberto Sardo assumed command of the Italian air force at Aviano from Col. Rosario Scarpolini. Colonel Sardo was thrilled when he found out he was coming to Aviano.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Holzworth

Aviano Airmen return fire as they are attacked by opposition forces during the first Expeditionary Combat Skills training course Dec. 12 through 16. The 31st Security Forces Squadron graduated 73 Aviano members who were gearing up to deploy on the next rotation. They learned what to expect in the area of responsibility.

Purple heart – Tech. Sgt. Chris Power, 31st Maintenance Squadron aircraft hydraulic system chief received the Purple Heart from Brig. Gen. Robert Yates, 31st Fighter Wing commander.

October

Viper Javelin – More than 120 Aviano Airmen deployed to Graf Ignatievo Air Base, Bulgaria in support of Viper Javelin 2005. Viper Javelin was designed to provide a unique opportunity for U.S. Air Force and Bulgarian air force personnel to enhance relations and expand education and training with dissimilar aircraft.

November

Thanksgiving – Combat Care and the 31st Services Squadron made Thanksgiving more meaningful to some Aviano members in 2005. The Thanksgiving meal was combined with the deployed spouses meal. More than 30 volunteers lent a hand to make the holiday special to more than 220 guests at the La Dolce Vita dining facility.

December

Golden Drum – The 31st Logistics Readiness Squadron Fuels Management Flight made history when it earned the Golden Drum award for the second year in a row. The flight is now in competition for the American Petroleum Institute trophy, which recognizes the best fuels flight in the Air Force. The API trophy award recognizes the best fuels flight in the Air Force. The Golden Drum is a U.S. Air Forces in Europe-level award that recognizes fuel flight operations excellence. "This is the first time in the history

of Aviano that we have won the award back-to-back," said Senior Master Sgt. Ronnie Brock, 31st LRS Fuels Management Flight chief.

Xbox champions – Senior Airman Paul Mullins, 31st Maintenance Squadron, Staff Sgt. Andre Butler, 31st Communications Squadron, Airman 1st Class Dale Hoipkemier, 31st CS, and David Hart, Aviano Commissary, won the U.S. Air Forces in Europe X-Box tournament Dec. 17.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Holzworth

The Area One water tower topples over after being imploded May 30. The tower was removed to make room for construction in the area as part of the Aviano 2000 base renovation project. The space was used for a parking lot next to a new medical facility.

Peace march

A peace march honoring Martin Luther King Jr. is at 4:15 p.m. today behind the commissary in Area F. Participants are asked to be in place by 4 p.m.

MLK service

The church gospel service is sponsoring a base-wide commemoration service in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 10 a.m. Sunday at the base theater. The service features poetry, dance, special music, and guest speaker Chaplain (Capt.) Calvin Dixon from RAF Lakenheath, UK. This event is open to everyone.

Post office hours

The Aviano Post Office returns to normal duty hours Sunday. The Finance and Postal Service Center are open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays and down days and are closed Sundays and holidays. The Postal Annex is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Mondays through Fridays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays and down days and is closed Sundays and holidays.

Girl Scout cookies

The Aviano Girl Scouts are selling cookies Sunday through Feb. 4 at the base exchange and shopette after 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The cost is \$3.50 per box and proceeds benefit the Aviano community.

Black History Month

The African American Heritage committee meets 3 p.m. Wednesdays in Bldg. 103 in the second floor conference room. Anyone interested in attending, volunteering and sharing ideas is welcome. For more information, call Staff Sgt. Tamecca Miller at Ext. 5242, Master Sgt. Virginia Wimmer at Ext. 5519 or Master Sgt. Luis Adams at Ext. 7835.

Child rearing class

Family Advocacy hosts a "1,2,3 Magic" class, de-

signed for parents of children ages 2-12, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Wednesday in Bldg. 108 in Area One. The class addresses the difficult task of child discipline with humor and insight and discusses techniques that eliminate yelling, arguing or spanking. The class is offered every third Wednesday of the month. For more information, call Ext. 5667.

Embry-Riddle

Embry-Riddle University offers certificates in logistics, supply chain management for undergraduate students and integrated logistic management for graduate students. Classes can be applied toward bachelor and master degree programs. For more information, call Ext. 5140.

Lost and found

The 31st Security Forces Squadron Investigations Section is the base point of contact for lost and found property. Found property can be turned in to the law enforcement desk in Bldg. 1019 in Area F. Inquiries about lost property should be directed to the office where the property was lost before calling Ext. 5401 or 0434- 30 -5401.

CCAF

The Education Center is holding weekly information sessions on the Community College of the Air Force associate degree program. Members interested in learning more about earning a CCAF degree should attend. Sessions are 9 a.m. every Monday at the Education Center, Bldg. 186, Area One.

Marital classes

Learn more about yourself, your partner and your relationship by understanding personality types and how they interact both positively and negatively with Family Advocacy's marital enrichment class. The two-session class is from 6 to 8 p.m. Jan. 25 and Feb. 1 in Bldg. 108, Area One. On site

childcare is available. For more information, call Ext. 5667.

Resume workshop

The Family Support Center hosts a resume writing class from 10 a.m. to noon Jan. 27 in Bldg. 118, Area One. The class teaches the basics of creating a resume, the various formats, key words and the importance of a cover letter. The class is open to everyone. Sign up by calling the FSC at Ext. 5407 or e-mail sylvia.flores@aviano.af.mil.

Prayer breakfast

A National Prayer Breakfast is scheduled for 8 a.m. Feb. 8 at the La Bella Vista club. The guest speaker is Chaplain (Brig. Gen.) Cecil Richardson, USAF Deputy Chief of Chaplains. Tickets cost \$4 for club members and \$5 for non-club members and can be purchased through first sergeants.

In the know

Tune in to AFN Prime Atlantic on decoder Channel 12 from home. It's the only TV source for Aviano-specific information about community events and for special announcements.

From on-base, tune into AFN Prime Atlantic, AFN Spectrum, AFN Pacific and AFN Sports for all the latest information about what's happening in the Aviano community.

MEO volunteers

The Military Equal Opportunity office seeks volunteers to serve as chairpersons for this year's Wing Special Observance Committees. Volunteers are needed for the following: Women's History Month, March; Days of Remembrance, April-May; Asian Pacific Heritage Month, May; Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept. 5 - Oct. 15 and American Indian/Alaskan Native Heritage Month, November. To volunteer, call Tech. Sgt. Brenda Fleming at Ext. 5851.

Reel Times

Today, 5 p.m. - "Yours, Mine and Ours" Rated PG - A widow and widower fall in love and get married, but the resulting combined eighteen children make for a hair-raising situation under one roof. Starring: Dennis Quaid, Rene Russo

Today, 8 p.m. - "The Weather Man" Rated R - A weatherman going through hard times discovers life is like the weather; it's completely unpredictable. Starring: Nicolas Cage, Michael Caine

Saturday, 5 p.m. - "Dreamer: Inspired by a True Story" Rated PG - A trainer and his daughter nurse a horse back to health and attempt to win the Breeders' Cup Classic. Starring: Kurt Russell, Dakota Fanning

Saturday, 7 p.m. - "Prime" Rated PG-13 - A recently divorced 37-year-old career woman falls for a 23-year-old painter who just so happens to be the son of her therapist. Starring: Meryl Streep, Uma Thurman

Sunday, 7 p.m. - "The Weather Man" Rated R

Wednesday, 7 p.m. - "Yours, Mine and Ours" Rated PG

Thursday, 7 p.m. - "Prime" Rated PG-13

(Titles and times are courtesy of www.aafes.com, and are subject to change.)

Fly Bys

Local area events

Saturday and Sunday - Christmas market in Verona. The market is open from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 3 to 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit <http://www.ilvilaggiodinatale.it>.

Call Ext. 5407 for information on this events.

Tourist passports

Having a tourist passport when traveling is the safest way to travel. Information, Tickets and Travel passengers must have a tourist passport to travel to Poland, Croatia, Slovenia, Russia, Romania, Hungary, Czech Republic, Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel and Kenya. Passports may be obtained at the Aviano Military Personnel Flight.

Project SMART travel

- Don't wear clothes that easily identify you as American, such as those displaying the flag, American colleges or sports teams.

- Avoid talking about religion or politics with strangers. If a person ever approaches you with the intent to start such a discussion, ignore him or her and walk away.

- Leave a copy of itinerary with family or friends in case of an emergency.

- Become familiar with local laws and customs of the countries you are visiting.

- Avoid carrying handbags and fanny packs; they are easy targets for theft.

Winter wonderland

Local ski resort offers something for everyone

By Senior Airman Sarah Gregory
31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Aviano members looking to get outdoors this winter need look no further than the pre-Dolomite mountains that dominate the local landscape. Standing tall over its neighboring mountains is Piancavallo, or white peak mountain, which offers a variety of winter activities.

Depending on your starting location, it's only a 30- to 45-minute drive to the ski resort town. To get there, follow the signs for Piancavallo off of Mountain Highway – the turn-off is between Budoia and Aviano. Once there, visitors should find plenty and sometimes creative parking spots.

A typical resort town, Piancavallo has something for everyone – including the athletically challenged. Besides skiing, there's a snowboard park, hockey, curling, sledding, cross-country skiing and a snow park for children. They even have courses available through the Italian Arctic Survival School.

If you don't own your own winter equipment, Aviano's Outdoor Recreation Center rents skis and sleds for cheap and they can be kept over the weekend.

After exhausting yourself on the slopes, or in my case, the bunny hills, it's nice to relax over a meal or cup of coffee in one



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Jerome Baymore

Even the athletically-challenged can enjoy winter sports at Piancavallo's sledding hills.

of the cafes around town. Laid out in a semi-circle, the town of Piancavallo is easy to navigate. In addition to several restaurants and cafes, there are a few shops selling everything from winter gear (did anyone forget their gloves?) and touristy souvenirs.

Don't let the cold weather keep you indoors this winter. Whether you're a ski buff or just taking the kids sledding for the day, Piancavallo is a small but charming place to spend a snowy day.

Left: Sledding at Piancavallo isn't as scary as it looks. There are a variety of slopes for kids and adults.



Looking to travel? Check out travel advisories, restrictions and other information at usembassy.state.gov before the trip.



Photo by Senior Airman Sarah Gregory

The Ponte di Rialto bridge in Venice, Italy, spans the Grand Canal. Venice is famous for its Carnevale season from late January to early February.

Information, Tickets and Travel

Upcoming tours from the Information, Tickets and Travel office include:

- Saturday - Guided Trieste and its castles
- Saturday - Guided Milan
- Monday - Ski trip to Cortina with ski pass included
- Jan. 21 - Guided Florence
- Jan. 21 - Guided Munich
- Jan. 28 - Venice for Carnevale

- Jan. 28 - San Marino
- Feb. 24 - 26 - Budapest, Hungary

ITT escorts ensure the group arrives and departs from the destination as scheduled and will do everything possible to make the trip safe and comfortable. Escorts also provide general information about the area. Call Ext. 5072 or 5026 for more information.

Aviano Airman jump starts return to AF track team while deployed

By Tech. Sgt. Mike Hammond
380th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

Southwest Asia – Especially during the holidays, he jumps through hoops to sort, send and receive mail for the 1,400 deployed members of the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing.

After a long day of work at the base post office, Aviano's Senior Airman Michael Kohut likes to jump through the air and into the sand as he practices his long jumping and triple jumping skills – mindful of his goal to once again join the Air Force team.

Airman Kohut said he won't soon forget the sense of amazement he felt to be around the caliber of athletes he saw when he was among 24 Air Force members selected to represent the service in the Air North Track Championships in Belgium during June 2005.

"I really didn't know what to expect when I got onto the team," he explained. "It was pretty hectic at first, getting to know everyone and having to compete in a warm-up meet the day after getting there – it was an eye opener, for sure."

When the team arrived in Belgium for the championships, Airman Kohut said he learned about being on a close-knit team. "We went everywhere as a team – dinners, practices, travel time, everything. It was a great feeling to be a part of the team. On the day of the meet, I was really nervous to compete ... but I was able to calm down and perform to the best of my abilities."

Airman Kohut made it to the Triple Jump finals at the event – his first Air Force meet. He also marked a personal record with a triple jump of more than 40 feet.

Looking back on those times as he goes about his day-to-day duties now in a deployed environment gives Airman Kohut the drive to go out and practice, even in the desert heat.

"(Competing) was a feeling I'll never forget – wearing the USA jersey and representing the Air Force and my country is something I'm very proud of!"

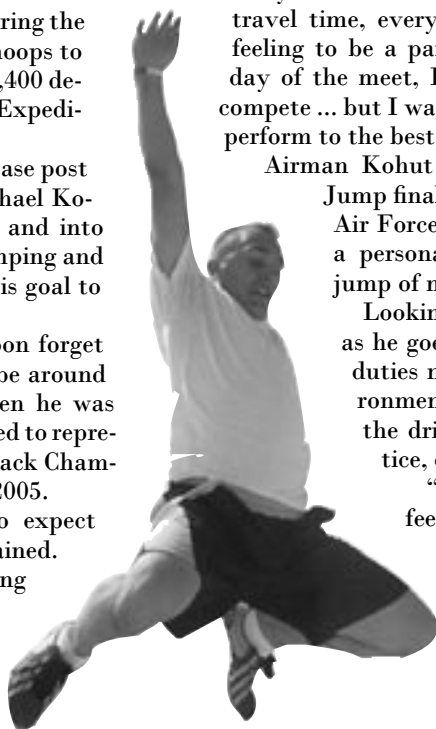


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mike Hammond

Senior Airman Michael Kohut, 380th Expeditionary Communications Squadron, lands in the sand after a long jump. While deployed, Airman Kohut plans to practice for the Air Force track team. Airman Kohut said he'll never forget wearing the U.S. jersey during the Air North Track Championships in Belgium during June 2005, and representing the Air Force and his country.

Fly Bys

Fitness center hours

The Area Two fitness center hours are from 5:30 to 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and it is closed on weekends. For more information, call Ext. 5269.

Aviano Grifoni

The Aviano Grifoni full contact semi-pro American football team has openings for its 2006 season. For more information, call Jerome Baysmore at 348-731-3388 or send an e-mail to deebobaysmo@yahoo.com.

5k run

A 5k run is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Monday at the Dragon Fitness Center. For more information, call Ext. 7459.

PC Wars

The next PC Wars tournament is at 5 p.m. Jan. 20 at the Community Center. Gamers must bring their own computer.

Olympic torch

The Olympic torch will be passing through the Aviano area Jan. 22. The torch will pass through the streets of Sacile and on SS-13 between 2:51 and 3:05 p.m., through Fontanafredda via SS-13 at 3:34 p.m., through Porcia at 3:54 p.m., and through the streets of Pordenone at 4:20 p.m. The last street the torch will pass is Viale Treviso at 5:30 p.m. in Pordenone. The torch's entire schedule can be found at <http://ftp.torino2006.it/uploads/pdf/CompleteRoute.pdf>. Aviano specific information is on page 58. For more information, visit <http://www.fiammaolimpica.it/>.

Ski/Snowboard

Outdoor recreation offers ski and snowboard lessons beginning Feb. 17 at Piancavallo. The two-hour lessons are held on five Saturdays. The cost is \$130. Sign-ups will be taken until Jan. 31 or when classes are full. For more information, call Ext. 8623.

Having a plan saves lives, money

By Lt. Col. Todd Phinney
31st Fighter Wing Safety office

Just how happy is happy hour? By saying happy hour, I'm referring to consuming alcoholic beverages in your home, with friends in a local pub, etc.

Here is my short answer. Done under the correct circumstances it can be absolutely fine. Done under the wrong circumstances, consuming alcohol can lead to horrible, life-changing events.

Preventing these life-changing events is simple if you have a plan. Before I throw a switch in one of our F-16s, I have a plan. Every portion of the flight -- from engine start to engine shutdown -- is completely scripted in my mind and in my wingman's mind.

"Flying by the seat of your pants," when it comes to drinking and driving is a recipe for disaster. The low allowable blood alcohol content rate in Italy and diminished thinking skills make drinking and driving a no-brainer. Drinking and then thinking about how to get home is not a good plan.

Too many Airmen have said, "I'm fine, I can drive" or "It won't happen to me." Baloney. From 2003 to 2005, 93 Aviano Airmen (please pause and think about this number for a second) received an Article 15 or court martial for a DUI. How many of them do you think said it wouldn't happen to them before they turned the key?

Let's put it in personal terms by looking at some consequences resulting from drinking and driving.

The first that comes to mind is killing someone. Besides facing a negligent homicide conviction, imagine having to go through life knowing you killed someone because you failed to have a plan to get home safely.

The National Highway Traffic Administration reports 16,000 people are killed annually

in the U.S. due to drunk and drugged driving. How many of these impaired drivers intentionally set out to kill themselves or other folks?

A step short of killing someone is being convicted of a DUI and the resulting impact. Under the UCMJ, there is no standard response for a DUI conviction. However, there are a wide array of punishments available to commanders and local judges.

It's important to note that if there is damage to Italian property or citizens, you could be tried in an Italian court and serve time in an Italian jail. There is the possibility of court fees, jail time, restitution or administrative fees if handled in the Italian system.

In cases that do not involve damage to Italian people or property, offenders fall under the U.S. military justice system. Punishments include administrative actions, non-judicial punishment, or a court martial and a federal conviction. Less than honorable discharges follow you for the rest of your life.

Like your pricey Italian insurance premiums now? Get a DUI and you will be considered "uninsurable" and released. Once you regain your driving privileges, you will have to get coverage from a high-risk insurer -- real expensive!

You also face the permanent loss of income if discharged or the potential loss of income due to a reduction in rank, forfeiture of pay or the potential of receiving no pay while in a military prison.

So just how happy is happy hour? Just a few euro worth of alcohol could cause untold life-altering financial and emotional consequences.

On the other hand, armed with a plan before drinking can allow for a great, worry-free time. The choice is yours. The bottom line is that you are all far too valuable to the "World's Finest" fighter wing to ruin your career or your life over something that is so preventable.



The Cornerstone

An indispensable and fundamental basis

The Cornerstone Page is devoted to those who support junior enlisted, NCOs, CGOs and spouses. It's to share advice, ideas and opinions dealing with life in the Air Force and Aviano. It's also a forum to recognize those around us. The Cornerstone Page will also offer Air Force trivia and facts.

Submission info: We want to hear from you. Flex your writing talents and share your thoughts with us and the community.

Commentaries: Writers can send commentaries to vigileer@aviano.af.mil. Commentaries must be 500 to 700 words. Topics must be applicable to the Air Force, Aviano and appeal to the general public. For questions or concerns, call the Vigileer at Ext. 7344.

Kudos: Aviano members can send congratulatory messages to Vigileer@aviano.af.mil. Messages can be submitted for appreciation, retirements, awards, good service, promotions and graduations. For questions or concerns, call the Vigileer at Ext. 7344.

Deadline: The deadline for submitting information is close of business Thursday one week prior to publication. Faxed articles will not be accepted by the staff. The public affairs office is in Bldg. 1360, Room 19.

Recognizing The World's Finest

USAFE Award recipients

Master Sgt. Paul Reaves - 2005 USAFE Lt. Gen. Leo Marquez Communications-Electronics Award; Senior Master Sgt. Layne Wagoner - 31st Mission Support Squadron Personnel Superintendent of the Year; Senior Airman Brian Adams - 31st MSS Personnel Specialist of the Year; 31st Fighter Wing Military Equal Opportunity - Air Force Military Equal Opportunity Award; 31st Mission Support Squadron Education Center - Nathan Altschuler Outstanding Education and Training Flight Award; Staff Sgt. David Desjardin and Staff Sgt. Marilyn Smith - Air Force Education and Training Managers; 31st Mission Support Squadron - Outstanding Mission Support Squadron Award.

- Congratulations to Capt. Sam Payne, 31st Logistics Readiness Squadron for his selection to the 2005 Logistics Career Broadening Program.
- Congratulations to the following Airmen for their outstanding achievement on their Career Development Course: Senior Airman Kristen Griego, 31st Communications Squadron; Senior Airman Rian Williams, 31st Civil Engineer Squadron; Senior Airman Peter Hobson, 31st CES and Airman 1st Class Joseph McKeown, 31st CS.
- Congratulations to Gabriella Cuebas, third place Aviano winner for the 2005 Air Force Family and Teen Talent Contest.